
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**®
New England District
696 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Comment Period Begins: July 20, 2010
Comment Period Ends: August 27, 2010
File Number: NAE-2005-395
In Reply Refer To: Robert DeSista
Phone: (978) 318-8879
E-mail: Robert.j.desista@usace.army.mil

The Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) has requested a Corps of Engineers (Corps) permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to place fill in waters of the United States to construct airfield safety and efficiency improvements at the **T. F. Green Airport** in Warwick, Rhode Island. Work will include construction of runway safety area enhancements, a runway extension, a taxiway relocation, and roadway relocations and/or realignments. Two alternatives being considered (Alternatives B2 and B4), described in more detail below, are comprised of eleven program elements including a Runway 5-23 extension to 8,700 feet.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of the RIAC project is being conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) with the participation and assistance of cooperating Federal Agencies including the Corps.

A Joint Public Hearing will be held with the FAA for their Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and our Department of the Army Permit process at 6:00pm on Tuesday, August 17, 2010 at the Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, 400 East Avenue in Warwick, RI.

Copies of the DEIS Executive Summary, DEIS Volumes, and DEIS technical reports will be available for review at the following libraries after July 16, 2010 and online at www.vhb.com/pvd/eis.

Central Library – 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick
Pointiac Free Library – 101 Greenwich Ave, Warwick
Apponaug Branch – 3627 Post Road, Warwick
Conimicut Branch – 55 Beach Ave, Warwick
Norwood Branch – 328 Pawtuxet Ave, Warwick
Cranston Public Library, Central Branch – 140 Sockanosset Cross Road, Cranston
Providence Public Library, Central Branch – 150 Empire Street, Providence

The **FAA** is the federal agency responsible for safe air transit and facility operation, and the Corps will utilize their findings on these issues in its deliberations. The focus of this comment period and hearing from the Corps perspective, is to receive comments on the impacts of the placement of fill material within waters and wetlands, which is the Corps primary area of jurisdiction for this project. Anyone wishing to comment is encouraged to do so. Comments can be submitted at the Hearing or in writing by the above date.

RIAC has primary responsibility for defining, developing, maintaining, and operating the physical infrastructure of the Airport to ensure that it functions effectively and efficiently as Rhode Island's primary commercial passenger airport. RIAC conducts planning efforts to assist in identifying the

facility needs and, where appropriate, improvements that will allow the Airport to function efficiently and responsibly.

If you have any questions concerning specifics of the Airport Improvement Plan, you may contact **Ms. Brenda Pope of RIAC at (401) 737-4000.**

WATERWAY AND LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED WORK:

The work is proposed in wetlands associated with Buckeye Brook, its tributaries and associated wetlands. The proposed location of the T.F. Green Airport Improvement Program is on the USGS East Greenwich quadrangle sheet at Zone 19 UTM coordinates 297911 E and 4622026 N (location of T.F. Green Airport).

AUTHORITY:

Permits are required pursuant to:
Section 404 of the Clean Water Act

PROPOSED WORK AND PURPOSE:

The Basic Project Purpose of the T.F. Green Airport Improvement Program consists of the following safety and efficiency elements, which are common to both proposed alternatives:

Airfield Safety: To enhance airfield safety, the crosswind Runway 16-34 requires Runway Safety Area improvements to meet current FAA requirements. Although Taxiway C can be operated within acceptable safety margins, the existing lateral separation between Runway 16-34 and Taxiway C is below current FAA standard criteria, necessitating relocation of the taxiway approximately 100 feet to the west. Additionally, Hangar 1 encroaches into the Runway Object Free Area and must be removed.

Airfield Efficiency: To improve airfield efficiency, the primary runway needs to be lengthened. At its current length of 7,166 feet, Runway 5 23 cannot accommodate demand for commercial non-stop service to long-haul markets. The range of long-haul aircraft is limited by fuel loads: the greater weight of larger fuel loads requires longer runways for take-off than are currently present at the Airport.

Terminal Area Facilities Efficiency: Based on forecasts, four to eight additional commercial service gates are needed to enhance passenger processing efficiency. The timing of the improvements will be determined by passenger demand and airline needs. Expanding the Terminal Concourse would require removing the existing Belly Cargo facility, which in turn would require reconstructing this cargo/sorting facility at another location on the Airport.

Roadway and Parking Facilities Efficiency: The roadway system needs to be reconfigured to improve traffic flow. Additionally, passenger and employee parking facilities need expansion to address seasonal capacity constraints.

Support Facilities Efficiency: The existing Airport Fuel Storage Facility is undersized and needs to be expanded. Ground Support Equipment facilities for maintenance and storage are also undersized. The Airport needs to establish an appropriate location for future expanded integrated air cargo facilities.

RIAC proposes two build alternatives, B2 and B4, comprised of eleven program elements including a Runway 5-23 extension to 8,700 feet.

Alternative B2 was developed to avoid impacts to Main Avenue and minimize impacts to natural resources and residential communities. Runway 5-23 would be extended approximately 600 feet north and 1,000 feet south. This Alternative would shift Runway 16-34 north along its centerline approximately 400 feet to accommodate the improved RSAs on the Runway 16 and 34 Ends and minimize impacts to natural resources on the Runway 34 End. Alternative B2 would require a partial relocation of Airport Road in 2015 and a full relocation of Airport Road in 2020.

Alternative B4 was developed to minimize impacts to the residential communities and businesses, reduce mandatory land acquisition for construction, and avoid impacts to natural resources north of the Airport, including Buckeye Brook, a perennial stream that supports a herring run. Alternative B4 would extend Runway 5-23 south approximately 1,500 feet. Main Avenue would be realigned to the south at the Runway 5 End by 2015. Runway 16-34 would shift north approximately 100 feet to accommodate the improved RSAs. Runway 16-34 safety improvements would require partial relocation of Airport Road at the intersection of Post Road and Airport Road by 2015.

The proposed activity would necessitate directly impacting over 7 acres of wetlands subject to Corps of Engineers jurisdiction. Waterway impacts, depending on the alternative, ranges from 773 to 918 linear feet subject to Corps of Engineers jurisdiction. Since the project will require filling wetlands, RIAC will develop a detailed mitigation plan intended to mitigate for unavoidable adverse impacts to wetlands functions and values in the Warwick area.

The work is shown on the enclosed plans entitled “**T.F. Green Airport Improvement Program**” on 5 sheets dated “July 2010”.

MITIGATION:

The applicant’s proposal has gone through numerous iterations, reducing adverse impact to wetlands and streams to what is necessary to achieve the Basic Project Purpose, including safety improvements required by the FAA. Mitigation concepts have been developed to compensate for the functions and values lost as a result of the aquatic resource areas proposed to be impacted. Proposals include on and off site wetland restoration and/or creation, preservation, and construction of culverts and new stream channels. Mitigation concepts for functions and values have been presented to both the Corps and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). Based on the mitigation assessment, it appears that it would be possible to provide appropriate mitigation for both Alternative B2 and Alternative B4. Additional details on mitigation will be provided in the Final EIS for the Preferred Alternative and could involve a combination of the locations identified below:

Alternative B2

- Flood storage losses in the Buckeye Brook corridor and Warwick Pond may be compensated by excavating uplands south of the Runway 34 End, yielding 3 acres of wetlands.
- Wetland restoration would be enhanced by removing fill deposits west of Buckeye Brook, providing 0.5 acres of floodplain and wetland compensation.

- Wetland restoration in the vicinity of Lakeshore Road and Early Avenue may be undertaken off-site of the airport property, providing 0.2 and 0.5 acres of wetland.
- Off-site restoration was identified west of Warwick Avenue on the Pawtuxet River along the Cranston/Warwick City boundary, two miles north of the Airport. The site is located upstream of the Pawtuxet River Reservation, which includes high quality wildlife habitat in an urban setting.
- Land acquisitions would provide an opportunity to restore portions of the wetland and upland buffer. Flood storage, water quality, and groundwater discharge functions would be replaced by this mitigation. Additional opportunities for wetland restoration may be available at the western end of Spring Green Pond.
- An approximately one acre stormwater wetland could be created within the Route 37/Route 1 interchange. The portion of the wetland that would be altered to create a new Route 37/Route 1 interchange has been degraded by sediment laden runoff from the existing interchange. This sediment retention function is protective of the larger, higher value portions of the wetland distant from the interchange. This mitigation could replace the sediment retention function of the wetland area to be altered.
- The Three Ponds Brook wetland system south of the Airport Connector offers an opportunity for the preservation of bird and fish habitat.
- A potential 0.5 acre tidal wetland restoration area located off of Station Road would provide support for fish and shellfish habitat and production export functions.
- Approximately 0.5 acres of degraded tidal marsh near Greenwich Bay and 0.2 acres of upland buffer could be enhanced for fish, shellfish, wildlife habitat, and production export functions by eliminating stands of common reed to reestablish salt marsh and replant a cleared coastal buffer with native vegetation.

Off-site mitigation is recommended for direct impacts to multiple wetlands, which provide wetland wildlife habitat function. Five acres on the north side of the Pawtuxet River in Cranston and potentially one to two acres on the south side of the river in Warwick are possible restoration locations. A segment of the Pawtuxet River is being studied to assess impacts associated with removing the dam on the mouth of the Pawtuxet to re-establish a historic fish run. In addition to mitigating for vegetated wetlands, Alternative B2 would impact intermittent and perennial waterways (approximately 510 linear feet of Tributary A11 at the Runway 34 End and 121 linear feet of Spring Green Pond Inlet Stream at Fully Relocated Airport Road). Where tributaries are moved, culverts and new channels would be constructed under Alternative B2.

Alternative B4

Alternative B4 could utilize several of the sites described for Alternative B2. In addition to mitigating for vegetated wetlands, Alternative B4 would mitigate stream continuity for the approximately 651 linear feet of Tributary A11 impact by relocating stream segments and providing culverts.

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based upon a review of the project in accordance with the 404 (b)(1) Guidelines and an evaluation of the probable impact of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which may reasonably accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments.

All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are: conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural value, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain value, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of our Environmental Assessment and/or FAA's Final Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

SECTION 106 COORDINATION

Based on his initial review, the District Engineer has determined that the proposed work may impact properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places. Additional review and consultation to fulfill requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, will be ongoing as part of the permit review process.

ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSULTATION

The New England District, Army Corps of Engineers has reviewed the list of species protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, which might occur at the project site. It is our preliminary determination that the proposed activity for which authorization is being sought is designed, situated or will be operated/used in such a manner that it is not likely to adversely affect any Federally listed endangered or threatened species or their designated critical habitat. By this Public Notice, we are requesting that the appropriate Federal Agency concur with our determination.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

The States of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island have approved **Coastal Zone Management Programs**. Where applicable the applicant states that any proposed activity will comply with and will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the approved Coastal Zone Management Program. By this Public Notice, we are requesting the State concurrence or objection to the applicant's consistency statement.

The following authorizations have been applied for, or have been, or will be obtained:

- (x) Permit, License or Assent from State.
- (x) Permit from Local Wetland Agency or Conservation Commission.
- (x) Water Quality Certification in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

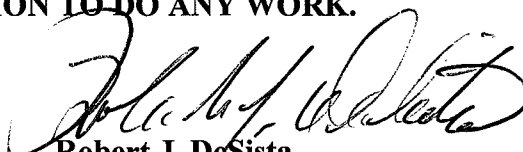
In order to properly evaluate the proposal, we are seeking public comment. Anyone wishing to comment is encouraged to do so. **Comments should be submitted at the hearing or in response to this notice by the above date.** If you have any questions, please contact me at (978) 318-8879, (800) 343-4789 or (800) 362-4367, if calling from within Massachusetts.

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FILE NO. NAE-2005-395

The initial determinations made herein will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice. All comments will be considered a matter of public record. Copies of letters of objection will be forwarded to the applicant who will normally be requested to contact objectors directly in an effort to reach an understanding.

In accordance with 33 CFR 325.2(a)(8), we publish monthly a list of permits issued or denied during the previous month at www.nae.usace.army.mil/reg, under the heading "Monthly General and Individual Permit Authorizations." Relevant environmental documents and the SOFs or RODs are available upon written request and, where applicable, upon the payment of administrative fees. Also visit www.nae.usace.army.mil for more information on the New England District Corps of Engineers programs.

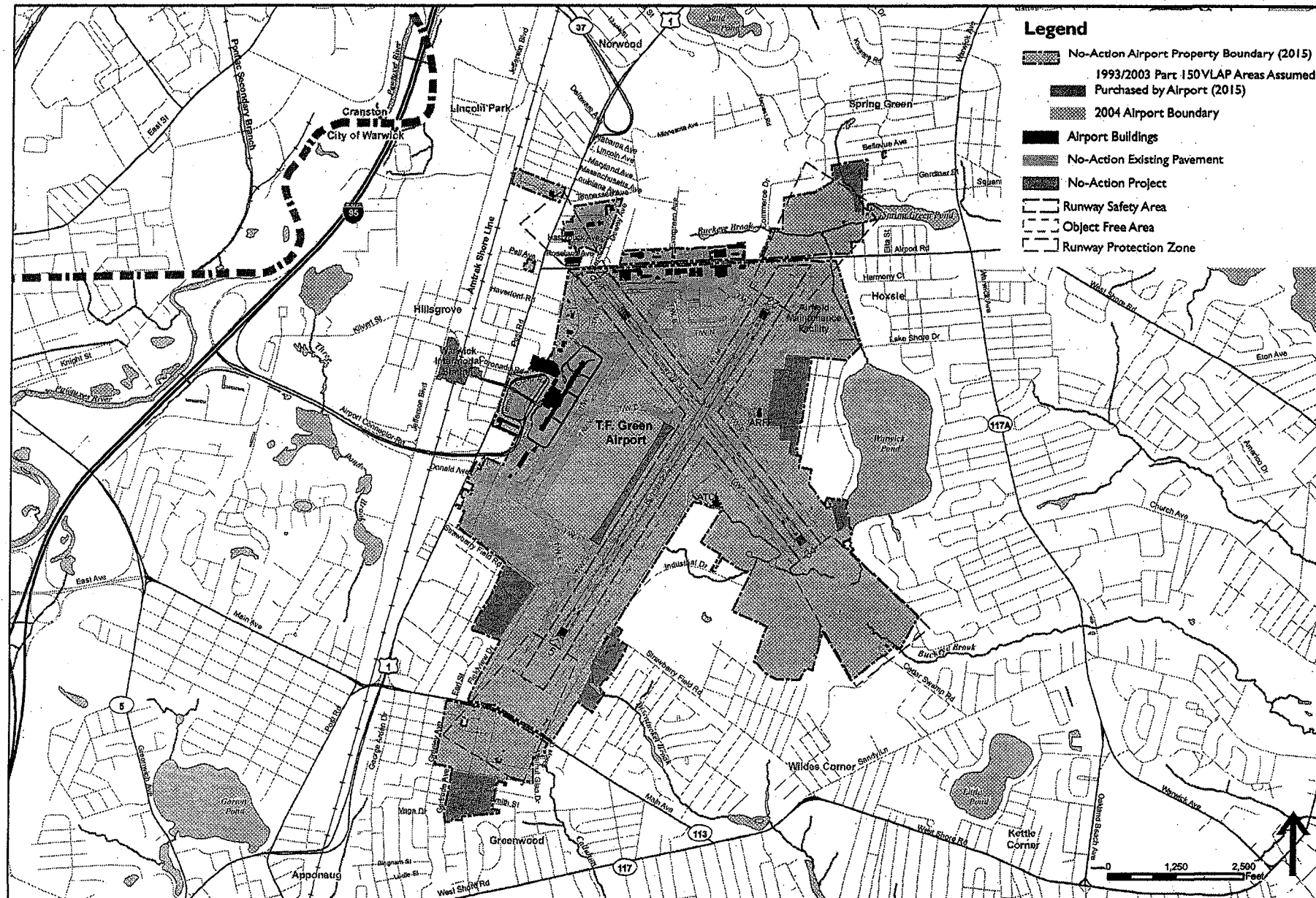
THIS NOTICE IS NOT AN AUTHORIZATION TO DO ANY WORK.



Robert J. DeSista
Chief, Regulatory Division

If you would prefer not to continue receiving Public Notices, please contact Ms. Tina Chaisson at (978) 318-8058 or e-mail her at bettina.m.chaisson@usace.army.mil. You may also check here () and return this portion of the Public Notice to: Bettina Chaisson, Regulatory Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751.

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____



Rhode Island Airport Corporation
200 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886

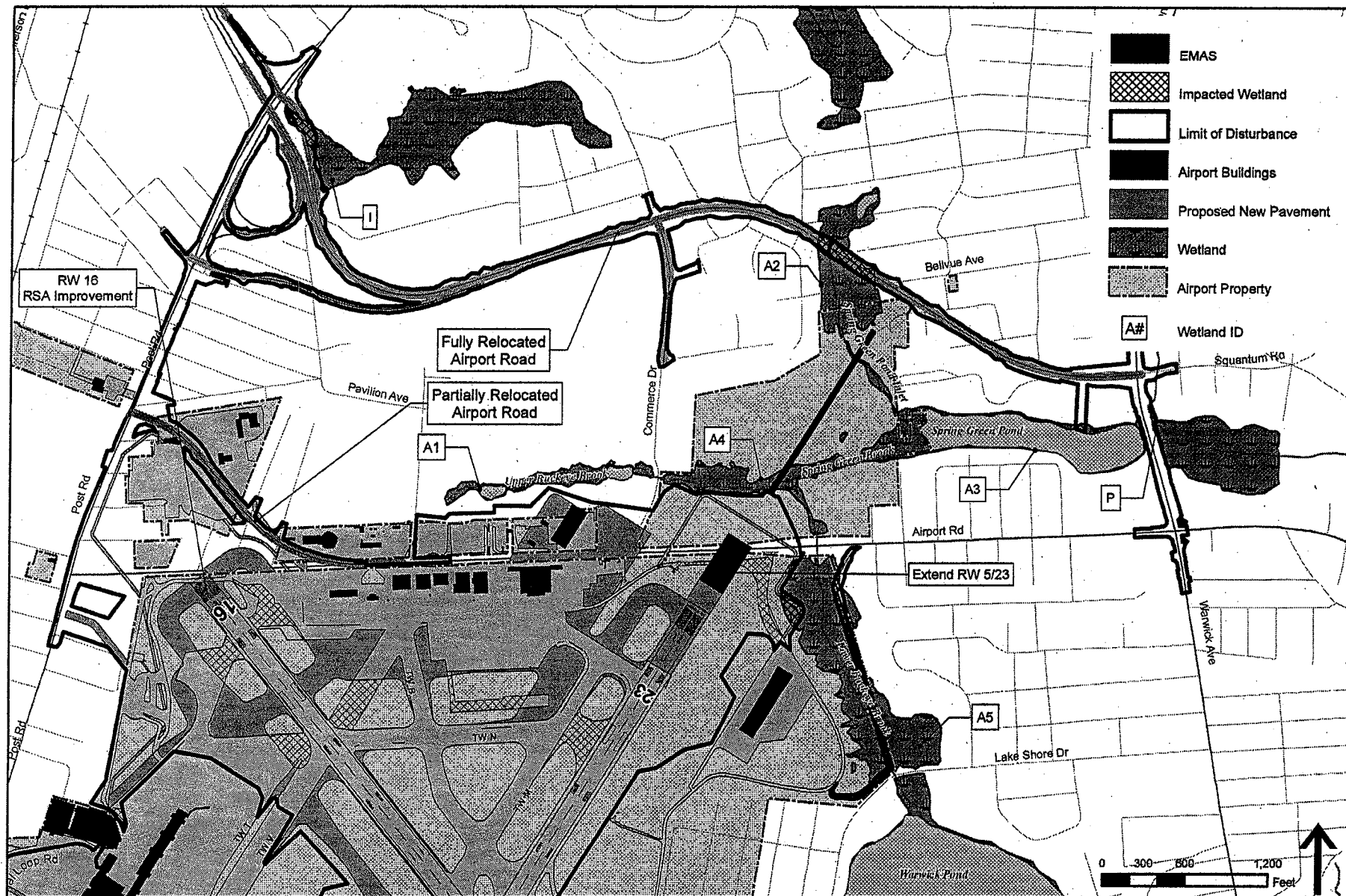
T.F. GREEN AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM Vicinity Map

AT: Warwick
IN: Kent County,
Rhode Island

APPLICATION BY:
Rhode Island Airport Corporation

DATE
July 2010

SHEET
1 of 5



Rhode Island Airport Corporation
200 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886

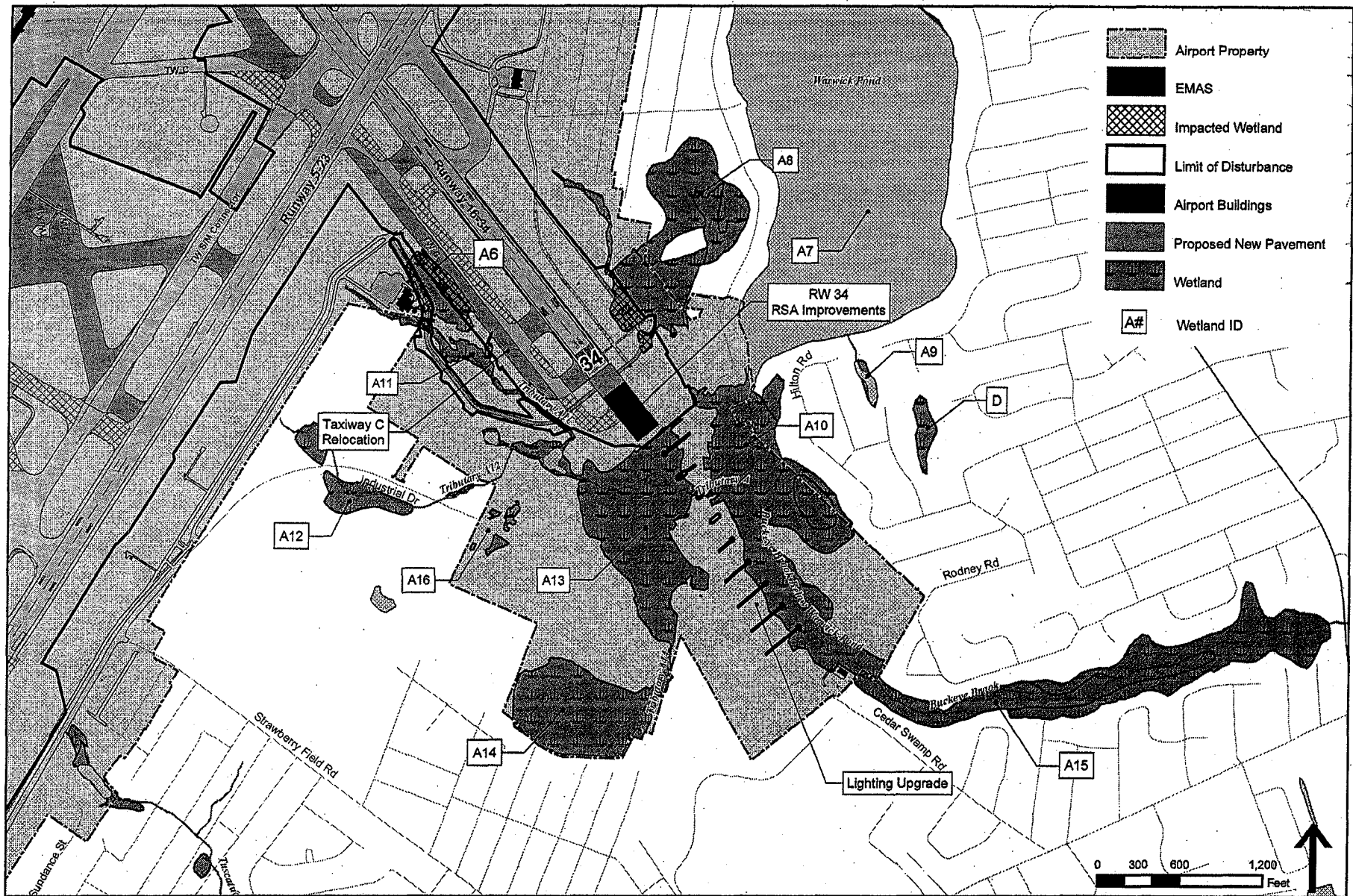
T.F. GREEN AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM Alternative B2 (North)

AT: Warwick
IN: Kent County,
Rhode Island

APPLICATION BY:
Rhode Island Airport Corporation

DATE
July 2010

SHEET
2 of 5



Rhode Island Airport Corporation
200 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886

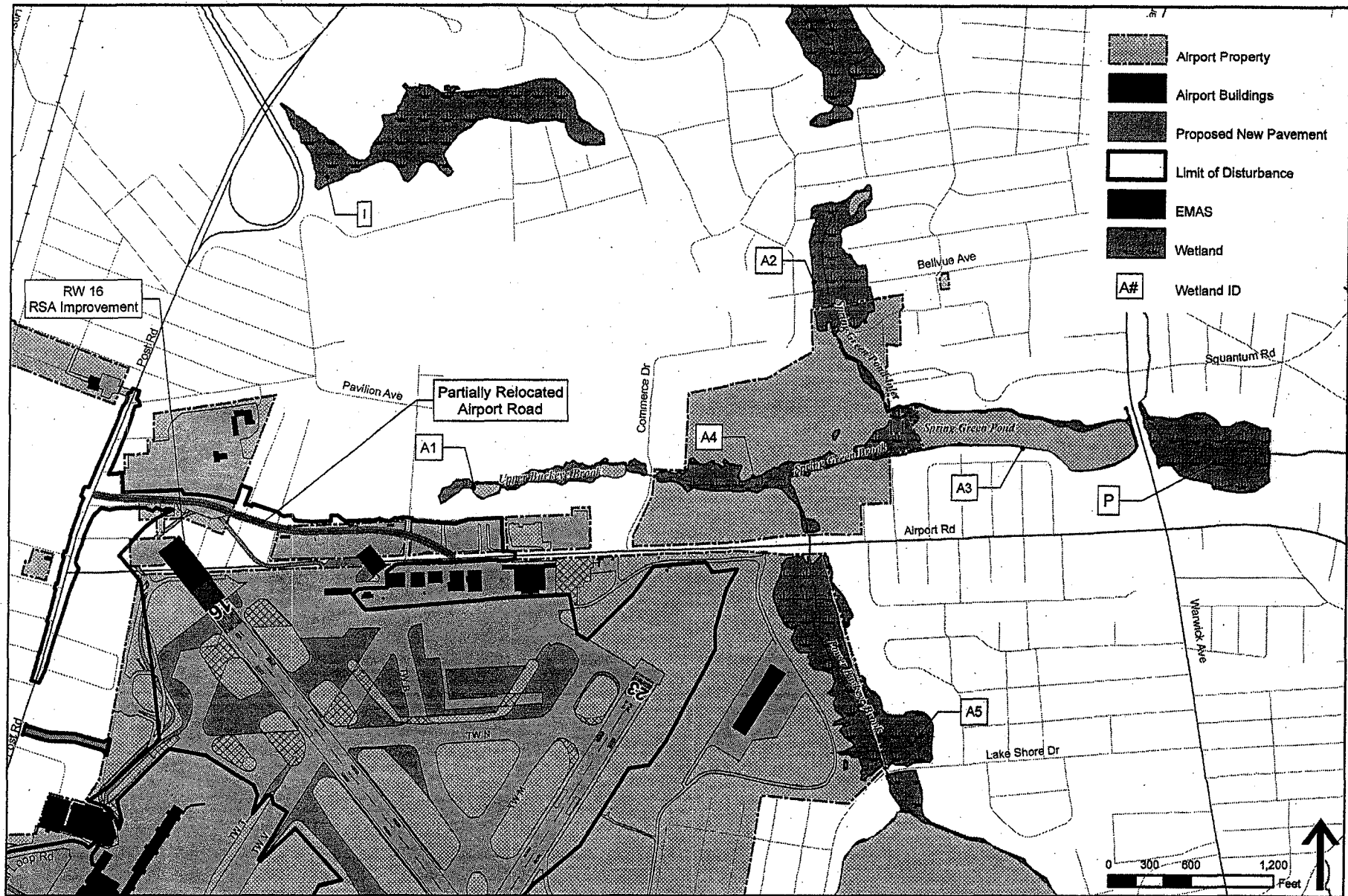
T.F. GREEN AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM Alternative B2 (South)

AT: Warwick
IN: Kent County,
Rhode Island

APPLICATION BY:
Rhode Island Airport Corporation

DATE
July 2010

SHEET
3 of 5



Rhode Island Airport Corporation
200 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886

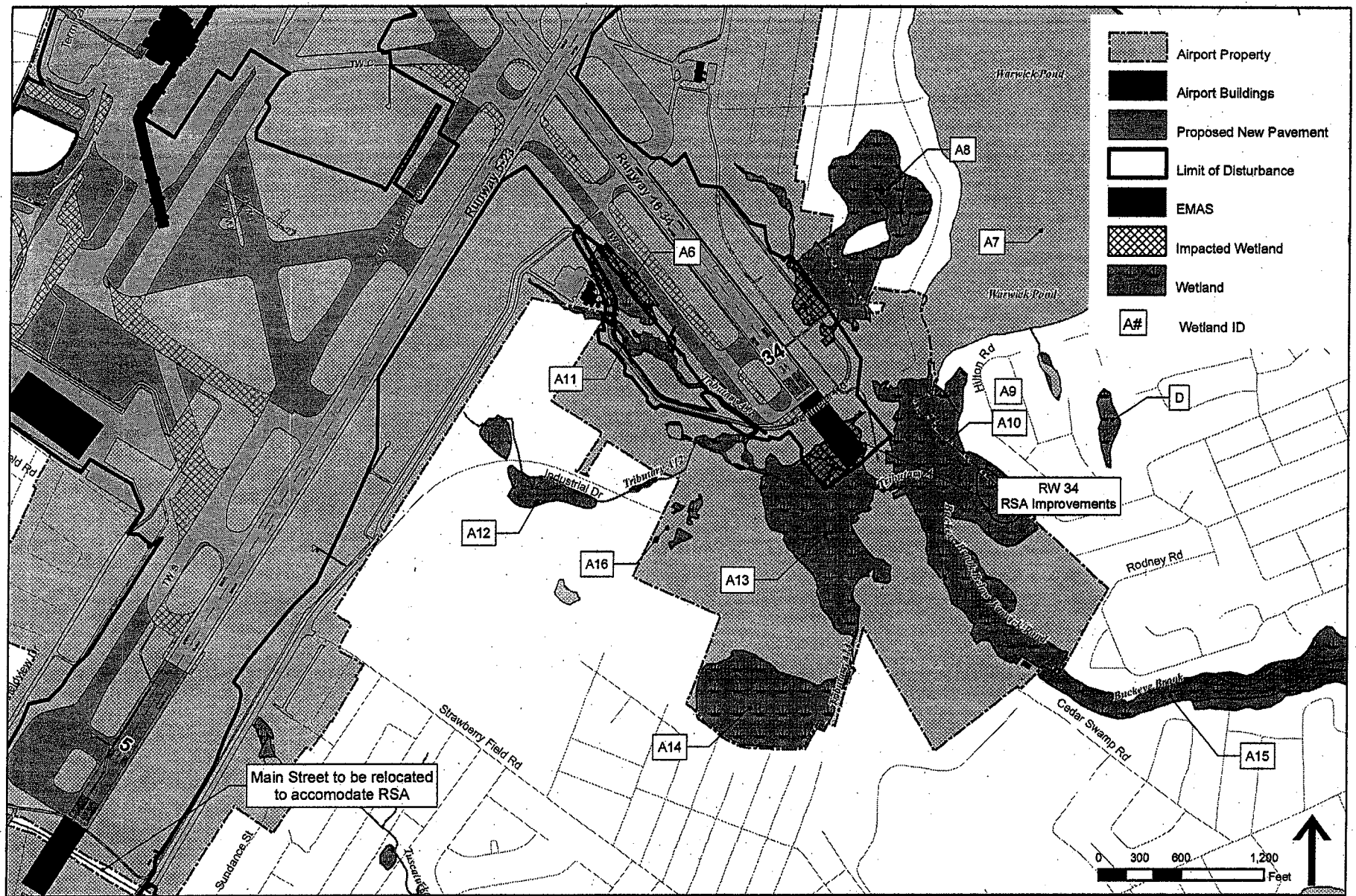
T.F. GREEN AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM Alternative B4 (North)

AT: Warwick
IN: Kent County,
Rhode Island

APPLICATION BY:
Rhode Island Airport Corporation

DATE
July 2010

SHEET
4 of 5



Rhode Island Airport Corporation
200 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886

T.F. GREEN AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM Alternative B4 (South)

AT: Warwick
IN: Kent County,
Rhode Island

APPLICATION BY:
Rhode Island Airport Corporation

DATE
July 2010

SHEET
5 of 5